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Specific Military Actions

Incident: FORMOSA CRISIS 1958

Date: 1958

Unit	Actions	Initiated	Terminated	Revealing Source
US 7th FLEET + FLEET MARINE FORCE CVAs Lexington,	US STEPS UP PATROLS NEAR TAIWAN, INCREASES # OF PLANES & SHIPS.	AUG 4	AUG 5	7th FLEET HIST
	US COAST GUARD 3 LST'S, CONDUCTS LARGE SCALE AIR EXERCISES, FLAG OFFICERS VISIT OFFSHORE ISLANDS, PLACE 3 CARRIERS IN TAIWAN AREA, TRANSPORTS NEW ARMY EQUIPMENT FOR 7 DIVISIONS TO OFFSHORE ISLANDS.	AUG 22		FF/7/FEF SER # 002-1026
	US GIVES NAT'LINT SIDEWINDER MISSILES	AUG 23		
	MARINE AIR GROUP MOVED TO TAIWAN UNDER GUISE OF TRAINING EXERCISE - REMAINED ON ISLAND WITH JCJ APPROVAL	AUG 24		
	CNO AUTHORIZES USE OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS & ORDERS "PREPARATION" TO USE ATOMIC WEAPONS			
	US PREPARES NIKE MISSILE BATTALION TO MOVE TO TAIWAN FOR DETAIL AIR DEFENSE.			
	US CARRIER HANCOCK & 4 DD'S ARRIVE	AUG 27		
	3 US CARRIERS WITH DD'S OPERATING NORTHWEST OF TAIWAN	AUG 30		
	US CRUISER COLUMBUS ARRIVES - ATTACK CARRIERS CONTINUE DAY & NIGHT SWEEPS & COMBAT AIR PATROL	SEPT. 2		
	US CARRIER MIDWAY ARRIVES	SEPT 4		
	CEASE FIRE PERIOD ORDERED BY CNO	OCT 6	OCT 19	
	CNO DIRECTS TRANSFER OF US FORCES OUT	OCT 20		

Source:

Specific Military Actions

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Seventh Fleet [*] (carriers, cruisers, U.S. Air Force destroyers) [*] carriers - Hancock, Shangri-La, Lexington, Midway, Essex, Bennington, Princeton (CVs) (2 arrive a little later) Hancock, Shangri-La, Lexington, Bennington, Princeton Essex U.S. air defense exercise 2 B-29 groups join Taiwan patrol Midway Seventh Fleet Hancock Lexington ^{400's} Princeton Shangri-La CINCPAC forces 6 F-100's 2 US ships PACAF units 6 F86-D airplanes	escorted Nationalist supply convoys - to within 3 miles of Quemoy (internt'l. waters) protection & supply CINCPACFLT informed 7th fleet that planned containment action ordered to leave Mediterranean (arrived 9/5) arrived, 2 left Pearl Harbor arrived N of Taiwan readiness condition "Yankee" takes position S. of Taiwan take positions N. of Taiwan joins; then moves to S.E. moves to S.E. on alert deployed to Taiwan begin patrolling Taiwan Strait. CVA group proceeds to Taiwan area on alert temporarily deployed to Taiwan - for Taiwan	23 Aug, 58 28 Aug (Halperin) 24 Aug 58 24 Aug 58 2 Sept 58 28 Aug 58 4 Sept 58 25 Aug, 58 27 Aug, 58 28 Aug 58 by 30 Aug 58 24 Sept 58 14 July, 78 3 Aug, 58 5 Aug, 58 6 Aug, 58 8 Aug 58	24 Oct 58	"Short of War" documentation bibliog, US Navy special list #1 Halperin, p 134 Halperin, p. 65, 63 "

US planes

patrolling 3 miles off Quamoy, reporting
PRC moves on mainland to Taiwan coast

5 SAC B-47s on Guam	on alert	17 Aug, 48	Halperin, p. 64
Midway	ordered to sail from Pearl to Taiwan	25 Aug 48	" p. 113
3 LSTs	dispatched to Taiwan	"	" p. 114
5th Air Force	on alert	26 Aug, 48	" p. 134
7th Fleet aircraft	daily surveys of straits beginning	"	" p. 135
16th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (F-86s)	deployed from Japan to Taiwan	28 Aug 48	announced 30 Aug
escorts	at first limited to 1 DP - restriction lifted when PRC shelled 2nd convoy (8 Sept)		
Atomic capable artillery &	delivered to Quemoy in 1958 and open discussion of nuclear studies against PRC		Baldwin "Limited War" Atlantic Monthly 203 (May 1958) 35-43
Actual convoy escort		8/29/58 - 10/6/58	Halperin, p. 496
Hancock arrives	Taiwan (south of)	8/27	Halperin p. 134
Hancock & Lexington	exercises	8/28	" p. 135
more jet fighters (announced)	to Pacific	8/30	" "

Local SituationIncident: Quemoy-Matsu 58Target country: Comm Peoples' Republic of ChinaType of regime: communist partyNames and allegiances of prominent individuals:

Major reaction to incident: continued shelling islands but at lower level; Current History says renewed shelling 3 Nov, 58 Taiwan trying to involve US in clashes w/ PRC; Taiwan pilots initiate clashes w/ PRC planes, Taiwan does not try hard to resupply islands w/o US escorts, etc; resupply by ship + airdrops

Soviet UnionOther Actors

Action

When

Others

Actor

Actions

When

PRC continuous shelling 8/23 - 10/6

Policy Context

Incident: FORMOSA

Diplomatic actions:

Official:	Form	Statements	To whom	Date
US Sec of State Rulled		WARNS COMM CHINA THAT AN ATTEMPT TO SEIZE QUEMOY & MATSU WOULD CONSTITUTE A "THREAT TO THE PEACE" IN THAT AREA.	PRC	AUG 23
NATL CHINESE FOR. MIN. HUANG		SAWS HE DOES NOT SEE HOW US "COULD DO OTHERWISE" THAN DEFEND QUEMOY & MATSU	USA	AUG 19
US DEPT OF STATE	PRESS RELEASE	3RD WARNING IN 6 DAYS (CAUTION CHINESE (PRC) AGAINST OFFENSIVE - response to PRC broadcast saying PRC Army determined to liberate Taiwan. St says ties between Taiwan & islands closer, "highly hazardous" <u>prev</u>)	PRC	AUG 28
PRES. EISENHOWER	PRESS CONF.	SAWS QUEMOY & MATSU MORE IMPORTANT TO FORMOSAN DEFENSE THAN 3 YEARS AGO	PRC	AUG 27

Other actions:

Type of action	Date
Army ^{others} expedite delivery of equipment to offshore islands troops + aircraft + patrol boat parts	27 Aug 58
Navy announces Essex moving from Mediterranean to 7th Fleet	28 Aug 58
US plans to assume air defence of Taiwan	24 Sept 58
formally takes over w/o public announcement - combined effort of Nat cli;	

[cont of st. Dept. release of 28 Aug]
for PRC to assume attack on offshore islands would
be a limited operation.

See st. pols

~~See st. pols~~
Formal statement
+ background
press conf

→ security of Taiwan increasingly related to
security of Quemoy ~~islands~~ "malad use of force"
as Q. would threaten security of US. Pres. would
authorize US mil force employment if circumstances
require
→ wait to see how hot the fighting, but not until in
extreme situation before offering mil. help;
would include bombing of PRC concentrations on mainland

4 Sept 58

attack on Quemoy by making clear US would be involved, while not
 Chiang to attack PRC & not alarming US public & allies, who opposed
 of defending off-shore islands

by whom:

Halperin, pp 121-22

to U.S. policymakers (include anticipated applicability to similar situations):
 & mobility of fleet demonstrated
 stabilized

Outcome

to target country:

to outside observers:

① US ② PRC ③ Taiwan ④ USSR

② Taiwan / USSR
 ① PRC / Taiwan